



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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September 8, 2006

PR-084

Butterfly Fest Marks Start of Monarch Migration

Gardens which once burst with summer colors are now wilting beneath the sun's diminished rays, and soon the fading summer will bid farewell to the much-admired monarch butterflies. Monarchs, our national insect, begin their migration southward from Fairfax County in mid-September and continue their exodus through October.

The Fairfax County Park Authority will celebrate the annual butterfly migration with several family-friendly programs at the Fall Fling- Butterfly Fest at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia. The Fall Fling, a fundraiser sponsored by FROGS (Friends of Green Spring), is scheduled for Saturday, September 16, 2006, with programs running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Every year, up to 500 million monarch butterflies, from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean, begin a 3,000-mile journey to central Mexico. Only about 60% of the butterflies will survive the journey. Butterfly Fest provides an opportunity for enthusiasts to learn more about these orange and black winged beauties.

Listen to a lecture by a monarch expert. You'll learn about threats facing butterflies like logging and forest fires. Kids can build a caterpillar cage to house their own tiny larvae in as it transforms into a butterfly. Learn how tagging and releasing butterflies helps researchers learn more about migration; then watch a Park Authority naturalist demonstrate the procedure. Take a walk through five acres of gardens to learn the best plants to include in your own butterfly garden. A plant sale will provide you with everything you need to get your garden started.

The Fall Fling is cosponsored by Green Spring Gardens, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Hidden Oaks Nature Center, and Washington Gardener magazine. All proceeds from the event will go toward acquiring more plants for the gardens and furthering Green Spring's educational efforts. Please call 703-642-5173 for more information.

Green Spring Gardens advances the awareness and practice of gardening in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. through its public gardens and educational programming. The 27-acre park features woodlands, ponds, display gardens, and an 18th century manor house. Green Spring Gardens is located at 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, Virginia.

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703-324-8700 • TTY: 703-803-3354 • ONLINE: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks • E-MAIL: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov



Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations, call 703-324-8563 or TTY 703-803-3354. Please allow ten working days in advance of events in order to make the necessary arrangements.

The Fall Fling – Butterfly Fest Schedule

- **9-10:30am - Lecture: The Grand Saga of the Monarch Butterfly**

The **dramatic migration of monarch butterflies** from North America to central Mexico every fall is one of the most amazing biological phenomena on the planet. But the mystery of their winter destination was not solved until January 1975. Join us for an illustrated lecture by eminent biologist, Dr. Lincoln Brower, who has studied the monarchs on their wintering grounds since 1977. Learn about the biology of this fascinating butterfly and about conservation issues they face both in the U.S. and in Mexico. \$15

- **10:30am-noon - Silent Auction**

Plants, art, garden excursions and other gardening essentials; bid on your favorites. The highest bidder wins! Refreshments served during the auction. Bidder number and refreshments. \$10

- **11am-2pm - Discovery Station: Monarch Magic**

Adults and families are invited to drop in, examine the monarchs mesmerizing life cycle, make a caterpillar cage and take a tiny larvae home to raise and release in your own garden. \$10/project

- **Noon-12:30pm - Tagging Monarch Butterflies**

Suzanne Holland, Hidden Oaks Nature Center naturalist, demonstrates how scientists capture, tag and release live monarch butterflies. Tagging monarchs aids scientist to track their journey southwest and discover more about monarch migration. \$5/person, \$10/family

- **2-3pm - Butterfly Gardening**

Butterfly gardening is very popular – it seems that everyone wants to attract the flying ‘jewels’ to their garden. To join the fun, come and learn the plants you should include in your flower beds. The session includes a walk in the gardens, please dress appropriately. \$10

- **11am-4pm - Plant Sale**

Let the plant shopping begin! Green Spring’s Garden Gate plant shop will open and the Virginia Native Plant Society will staff their tables. Free

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